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The Question of Armaments Not to be Dropped.

Everybody who reads and thinks knows that the question of armaments has become so urgent that it can no longer be evaded. The solution may be yet some way off, but come it must. The question is already in practical politics, both national and international. It has been there ever since the first Hague Conference. The second Hague Conference has left it a burning question. Following the recommendation of that Conference and the consequent resolution passed by the Munich Peace Congress last September, national commissions are being formed in different countries to study earnestly the problem of the restriction and reduction of the burdensome armaments of the world. The United States Commission, the names of which are given on another page, has already held its first meeting, and Hon. Theodore E. Burton of Ohio has been chosen as its chairman. These Commissions will, of course, have no authority, and can only make recommendations. The subject is one that must be dealt with by the governments themselves, whose labors may, however, be greatly facilitated by the careful study of the problem by capable men of different nations.

As might have been expected, Great Britain is already moving again, along the lines proposed before the second Hague Conference by the late Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, to secure early action in favor of limitation. After her proposals at The Hague last summer her sincerity would be open to question did she not do this, and it is not surprising that she has taken the matter up again so soon. She is sure to receive the support of nearly all the leading governments in whatever steps she may take. According to a statement published in a recent number of the Berlin *Tageblatt*, the British Cabinet, it is rumored in German diplomatic circles, has been for some weeks considering the idea of inviting the other powers to join her in arranging a conference of naval experts at The Hague to discuss and pass judgment upon the technical possibilities of a limitation or reduction of armaments. The Berlin *Tageblatt* publishes the following communication from its special correspondent in London, which probably gives very nearly the truth as to the preliminary steps that the British government is taking:

"I learn from a reliable source that England, while not indeed having the purpose of immediately sending out invitations for a diplomatic congress concerning the limitations of naval armaments, is still working continually for the attainment of that end. The steps which are now being quietly taken are not of an official nature. Up to this time no essential progress has been made; yet persons who are well acquainted with what has been done believe that the obstructions which now exist to the carrying out of the plan may be removed before a year passes. It is declared to me that it is an error to view Germany as a main hindrance to the realization of the idea. Already far-seeing English statesmen acknowledge that the understanding between England and Germany is progressing and is sure to develop into firm friendship. The international situation which would thus be created must logically greatly facilitate a European concert upon the limitation of naval armaments. More difficult will it probably be to secure the early agreement of the United States and Japan to participate in the negotiations."

It makes very little difference in what form the first step is taken. A commission of naval experts does not seem at first thought to be the most suitable type of committee to make the preliminary study. There is little doubt, however, that such a commission would do faithfully whatever it was instructed by the governments to do. When the investigation has once begun and the governments have seriously attacked the problem, they will not cease until